



## Veterans Advisory Council

Frederick County Government

Division of Aging and Independence

### Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2023

Winchester Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Winchester Room, 12 E Church St, Frederick, MD 21701

### Attendance

Voting Members	Present	Absent	Excused
Paul Hunter	x		
Sharon Jacko	x		
David Kaye	x		
Wilfred Plumley			x
Fred Schumacher	x		
Fred Wood	x		
Non-Voting Members			
Jay Hessler	x		
Nan Mann			x
Patty McDonald			x
Steve McKay			x

### Presenters:

LTC Chris Richelderfer, Clinic Commander, Richard Barquist Army Health Clinic

Michelle Sibinski, Store Director, Fort Detrick Commissary

**Staff:** Michaela Browne

### Welcome and Introductions

Fred Schumacher called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Fred led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Establishment of a quorum: After a review of attendance, Fred determined that a quorum of voting members was present.

Michaela Browne read the emergency exit instructions.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Sharon Jacko made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. David Kaye seconded. Motion passed.

### Old Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Fred Wood made a motion to approve the August and September meeting minutes. Paul Hunter seconded. Motion passed.

### Frederick County Veteran Appreciation Day Planning

Michaela asked the VAC for input on theme and format ideas for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Frederick County Veteran Appreciation Day. Sharon commented that she liked the idea of the future prepare for increase in aging veteran population.

Paul suggested we don't limit the event to just one theme and combine honoring the past and preparing for the future. Fred Wood suggested we include active-duty military and suggested Rose Hill Manor for a venue. Michaela stated that she was looking for a venue to accommodate a large crowd. Fred Wood suggested we include reenactment groups. Michaela suggested collaborating with the Ritchie Museum. David suggested the Civil War Museum as well. The consensus was a theme that honors the past and prepares for the future and the increase in the aging Veteran population.

### **Chair Comments**

Fred Schumacher commented that the VAC was well represented at the Fort Detrick Retiree Appreciation Day, the Day at Ease, and the Tri County Veteran Council meeting. The Retiree Day was the first one in five years and was attended by 150 retirees. The Day at Ease at the Foxie G Foundation was a great day and well attended despite a rain delay.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### Staff Report

Michaela reported she attended the Fort Detrick Retiree Day, the Day at Ease, the Elder Expo, and the Goodwill Career Fair. The Division of Aging and Independence has new resource guides with a section on Veterans that are available at the Senior Center. Michaela and Jay and others are serving on the Crisis Intercept Mapping leadership team. Operation Green Light is November 6-12. The deadline for Purple Star Schools is November 28.

#### Veteran Treatment Court

Fred Schumacher reported that the initial Veterans Treatment court application was sent back. That has been resubmitted and is awaiting approval. The program is expected to begin January 2025. The VAC can assist by developing a list of mentors to work with the Veterans and the court.

Fred also announced The Military Family Institute out of Purdue University has published an extensive report, broken down by state. They are going to further break it down by county. The report shows that Maryland has seen a decrease in Veteran homelessness but an increase in Veteran drug overdose deaths. Fred will get a summary report for the next meeting.

### **Presentations**

#### LTC Chris Richelderfer, Clinic Commander, Richard Barquist Army Health Clinic

The pharmacy is the most used service by retirees. The average wait time in the pharmacy is about 5 to 10 minutes. The pharmacy has a new service called 'queue anywhere' that allows you to get in line via text and do your shopping or run other errands and get text message updates. Beneficiaries can also get prescriptions through the mail. No changes in service currently for beneficiaries. If changes occur the clinic will have a 4-year plan to transition services. Veterans over the age of 65 will need to find a primary care provider off base but still have access to the pharmacy, lab, and radiology.

#### Michelle Sibinski, Store Director, Fort Detrick Commissary

The commissary is a great benefit to the Fort Detrick Community run by the Defense Commissary Agency. The commissary offers reduced prices on hundreds of popular brands. See presentation for full detail.

### **Public Comment**

What happens to the clinic and commissary if the government shuts down and how will that affect services. Clinic services will continue. The commissary will stay open for 60 days or until the fund is exhausted.

The VFW has a groundbreaking for its new building on October 28 using entrenching tools. Danny Rodriguez is a new VFW Service Officer and the only VFW Service officer in Frederick County. Services are free to Veterans.

## New Business

### Responsible Gun Ownership PSA – FC Suicide Prevention Coalition

Jay Hessler would like the VAC's feedback on the effectiveness on the PSA and if there is anything they can add to reach Veterans. There is a direct link between properly storing firearms and suicide prevention. Fred Wood was shocked by the numbers and hadn't seen the information before. Sharon commented that a lot was said in 15 seconds and captured her attention. Paul asked if there are resources for storing firearms. Jay replied that a limited supply of gun locks is available through the Suicide Prevention Coalition.

## Vacancies and Terms

Michaela announced that some members terms are ending, and members should submit letters of intent if they will be reapplying for another term. There are also other vacancies on the council and interested persons should apply through the county executive's office. Fred Wood stated that many council members are about to term out and that was part of the reason for the by-laws change that was requested. Michaela will follow up with the new attorney liaison about the by-laws and codes.

## Announcements

Fred announced that many Veterans Day Events will be held and posted on the VAC website.

Mission BBQ is giving free sandwiches to Veterans.

## Adjournment

Paul Wood made a motion to adjourn. Sharon Jacko seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

## Date of the Next Meeting

Date of the next meeting: November 15, 2023

Location: Platoon Veteran Service Center

Next Televised Meeting: January 17, 2024

Submitted by the Frederick County Division of Aging & Independence.

